

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE B18

THE WASHINGTON POST
26 August 1981

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CIA Said to Plan New Links With Anticommunists

The Central Intelligence Agency is preparing to join forces with totalitarian regimes and anticommunist factions in the conduct of covert operations around the world.

This could open up a Pandora's box of CIA-sponsored coups and revolutions. It could throw us into an uncomfortable embrace with extremists who are morally objectionable, with dictators who oppose U.S. principles, even with terrorists whom we claim to abhor.

CIA chief William J. Casey is eager to stir up mischief for such unfriendly regimes as Libya, Iran, Cuba and Angola. And he isn't too particular whom the CIA finds to do the dirty work.

In a top-secret planning document, he recommends "that consideration be given to improving the capability of the agency to rapidly escalate existing aid to anticommunist forces."

America's allies are apprehensive about CIA meddling in the world's trouble spots. To overcome this problem, Casey urges "that increased conditioning of allies to the necessity (and, indeed, the opportunity) for covert operations against Soviet sur-

rogates and revolutionary forces be coordinated by the NSC [National Security Council]."

Not only allied leaders but American policy makers are concerned about the clandestine activities that Casey advocates. They warn that the CIA will wind up supporting revolutionary forces and exile groups, with no control over what these groups do.

Casey argues that the dismantling of the CIA's covert capabilities now leaves President Reagan "with no reasonable option other than increased cooperation with anticommunist forces abroad."

This was tried by President Carter in an undercover effort to bring down Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in Iran. It was a hit-and-miss operation that is described in secret papers as clumsy and "chaotic," lacking central control and policy objectives. State Department strategists were moved to send Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, a blistering secret memo.

The clandestine operation, they wrote, was "clinically schizophrenic, withdrawn, confused and characterized by bizarre fantasy."

The CIA has been especially inept at staging covert military operations. The agency sponsored an invasion of Cuba that ended in the Bay of Pigs fiasco. In Laos, the CIA recruited an army of Meo tribesmen to harass the communists and then abandoned them to be slaughtered. Similarly,

the CIA armed Kurdish mountain tribes and encouraged them to attack Iraqi forces, only to withdraw support after the political signals were changed and leave them to the mercy of the Iraqi army.

Yet CIA strategists are eagerly planning to invest in new military adventures and other clandestine projects that once again would employ surrogates of dubious reliability. As far back as last May, Casey began his top-secret planning, with sights on Africa and the Middle East. My associate Ron McRae has uncovered a document, dated May 9, 1981, labeled "Draft Covert Operations Planning Document Africa-Middle East."

Casey contended that Soviet encroachment in Africa can be reversed. "The supply of Cubans available as trained surrogate forces," he wrote, "has probably been optimized." He argued, therefore, that the Soviets would be unable to supply any more Cubans to counteract a clandestine U.S. offensive.

"The end of requirements in either Angola or Ethiopia could release up to 10,000 Cubans," he wrote, "but the outlook for such availability appears slight, even in the absence of covert interventions by U.S. or allied powers."

Casey asked for "improved logistical capabilities," meanwhile, to support anticommunist forces, calling this a "critical need . . . especially in Angola."